

Montana State Legislature

2011 Session

Exhibit 4

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HANDS of HARVEST

the Craft Heritage Trails of North Central Montana



Celebrating North Central Montana's
Fine Craft and Cultural Heritage

HANDS of HARVEST

the Craft Heritage Trails of North Central Montana

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HANDS of HARVEST

Published by Hands of Harvest
P.O. Box 475, Fairfield, MT 59436
www.handsofharvest.org
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Acknowledgments

Hands of Harvest humbly thanks first and foremost the participants who believe that we can live with integrity, dignity and economic viability where we choose, remaining true to ourselves and the land. We owe much to the inspiration of Becky Anderson and her noble work with Handmade in America.

As with any collaborative project, many partners have been involved in bringing this second edition to a successful conclusion.

Funding for the work that created this guidebook has come from grants from Preserve America and Travel Montana. In addition, the Montana Arts Council, Russell Country Tourism, the Montana Department of Commerce, and the Cascade County Extension office have provided help and assistance. Diane Hausmann created our logo; the Palette redesigned our website, and Creative Wave Design has provided expertise for design work on the guidebook.

The efforts for this book have met with enthusiastic support from all levels of local government, and the steering committee acknowledges the help of those individuals who have included these loop trails in their planning and promotion.

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number

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Learning the Landscape	4
-------------------------------	----------

Gateway Crossing	10
-------------------------	-----------

Three Rivers Course	18
----------------------------	-----------

Peaks and Prairies Circuit	28
-----------------------------------	-----------

Foothills Roundabout	36
-----------------------------	-----------

Great Northern Trail	44
-----------------------------	-----------

Cottonwood Country Byway	56
---------------------------------	-----------

Castle Gap Track	68
-------------------------	-----------

Index	80
--------------	-----------

Glossary, Map	82
----------------------	-----------

Even without a map, you'll know when you are within the borders of this place we call home. The sky is bigger, the vista more dramatic, and complete strangers wave hello. The wind blows clarity about what's important in our hearts and minds. What we consider a good investment isn't necessarily Wall Street, but how we live each day.

Some of us are farmers and ranchers; others live and work in small towns. We are eternal optimists, and it is our connection to the land that makes our hearts beat. We stake our lives and livelihoods on the land. Each time a seed is planted; a calf is born; a raindrop falls; sweetgrass is braided and smoked; you will see an act of hope.

Because we are stewards, we feel the continuity of our work, not just between seasons, but from generation to generation. Wherever you find us, we are working to save our rural landscape and the disappearing lifestyle that we cherish.

Life here can be hard, but in our art we express the meaning and beauty we find in our landscape. Our craft is the heartbeat of this landscape.

On the edge of the Missouri River Breaks, quilters work in a riot of colors adding flair to traditional craft.

At the base of the Rockies, Blackfeet guides take visitors through ancestral homelands, sharing old stories.

Along the Great Northern Trail, a wheat weaver coaxes improbable raw material into works of art.

In view of the Rocky Mountain Front, a bed and breakfast offers five- star food and lodging.

Near the historic Sun River, a real-life horse whisperer works his magic with the animals he touches.

Along the mighty Missouri, weavers use fiber they have raised to make utilitarian items of soft beauty.

This is what Hands of Harvest is about—the preservation of this land in the circle of life. More than just a map, this little guidebook is our introduction and invitation to you. You will find us “just up the road.”

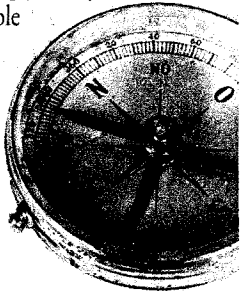
Using this Guidebook

Within the covers of this book lie seven trails with over 100 places to visit. There is no time constraint for completing each drive; you are welcome to spend as much or as little time as you wish. You may want to see just part of a loop; that's fine with us.

Each trail section has a map that indicates where the stops are located and what is offered there. We have listed stops sequentially in a route that we think is most natural. However, you are welcome to enter a loop at any point and go in any direction. You may even start on one trail and end on another! To help you in your travels, you may want to get a Montana State Highway Map (available by calling 1-800-867-4868).

Off many of the specific trails, there are also branch routes that lead to special points of interest. We hope that you will include these in your tour of our area.

This part of Montana is marked by diversity. Breathtaking sunsets stretch over prairies that seem to go on forever. Dramatic snow-capped mountains form a backdrop for gently rolling hills. Swift-moving, white-capped streams tumble over rocky beds, while slow-moving placid rivers cut through an ancient volcanic landscape. In short, there is something for everyone.



Planning a Hands of Harvest Trip

To make your experience a richer one, you might want to follow these tips:

Check out the landscape.

Before you start on your trip, review this book's listings because they will give you an idea of what to expect when you are here. We also suggest that you call ahead if someone in your party has special needs. Some sites do not have public restrooms and are not handicapped accessible.

Enjoy our pace.

Life here is guided by nature. Our prairies, mountains, rivers, and even the wind itself have unique rhythms. If you adapt your pace, you will see and enjoy more of what lies below the surface. It is probably a good idea to plan on your trip taking much longer than expected because you will find your pace slowing as you discover more.

Learn more about what we make.

Each object and experience here carries a story. Feel free to ask questions; we like to share what we are doing and why. However, many of the sites are working ranches. A new calf's arrival or a load of hay to haul may demand immediate attention. We are happy to welcome you, but some of us need to know when to expect you. Do call ahead or observe the hours listed in this book.